



# NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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My name is Shannon Lane and I am a social worker and member of the NASW-Connecticut Education and Legislative Action Committee. I live in Ansonia, Connecticut. I am testifying today regarding the budgets of the Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Public Health.

### **Department of Public Health:**

Regarding the budget of DPH, I ask the committee retain the \$53,000 that was allocated in the 2013 budget to hire a staff member in order to implement licensure for the LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) license. This investment of \$53,000 will result in a sizable net profit to the general fund. Our estimate of the number of new graduates this spring who will apply for licensure, as well as current MSWs like myself who will seek to be grandfathered in the licensure suggests that this investment of \$53,000 will result in at least \$200,000 in income annually for the state. It also allows for Connecticut to receive all of the benefits of the licensure law that the legislature decided were important when they passed this law in 2010. These benefits include consumer protection and increased opportunities for new MSWs in Connecticut who are interested in pursuing medical and clinical fields during their careers.

### **Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services:**

As a member of NASW, I support the aspects of the governor's budget that will increase funding for the Young Adult Services Program to provide an integrated, age appropriate delivery system to the young people in our state in need of mental health services. I also support the increase in funding for Community Based Services for Adults, and Supportive Housing for adults with serious mental illness. We are all aware of the challenges our state faces in helping people with mental illness, and these programs are essential.

I also support the increase in the Cost of Living Adjustment for Non profit providers. The community providers who provide essential health, mental health, and human services programs to the neediest in our community have not had a COLA in several years. The clients of these programs deserve a competent, experienced workforce, and this will help these nonprofit providers to retain quality staff members.

Finally, I would like to oppose the cuts in the governor's budget to the School Based Health Centers (SBHC) across Connecticut. School Based Health Centers provide a full range of medical and behavioral health services in an accessible, convenient setting regardless of a student's ability to pay or insurance coverage. SBHCs emphasize prevention and early identification and treatment. These services are exactly the wrong kind of services to cut. The small amount of money that is saved in the short run will cost us many times more in the long run, as the lack of prevention and early identification of problems means that our state will have to pay significantly more to address the resulting problems.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you have.